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Letter dated 11 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

During its Presidency of the Security Council in November 2016, Senegal will hold an information meeting on 17 November 2016 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the topic: "Strengthening of strategic partnership in combating extremist ideology" (see annexed concept paper).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fodé **Seck**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 11 November 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Concept paper

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation: enhancing the strategic partnership in the area of countering extremist ideology

Background

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, Member States conferred upon the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and agreed that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility, the Security Council would act on their behalf (Article 24). Chapter VIII of the Charter also encourages cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements in the peaceful settlement of disputes (Articles 52 and 53). International peace and security are faced nowadays with a variety of threats and challenges, and it is therefore imperative that the United Nations and regional and other organizations enhance their cooperation in order to address them comprehensively and effectively.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has enjoyed observer status in the General Assembly since 1975 (see General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX)). It was among the organizations invited by the Security Council, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to participate and make statements at the Council's previous deliberations on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security.

As part of its presidency of the Security Council in November 2016, Senegal will convene a high-level meeting to explore ideas and measures for further strengthening the existing strategic partnership between the United Nations and OIC in the area of countering extremist ideology. Several resolutions, presidential statements of the Security Council and relevant reports of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations can be useful references in this regard.

Since its creation in 1969, OIC, as the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, with 57 member States, has spared no efforts in working assiduously to contribute to the promotion of global peace, security, stability and development. Given the specificity of the situation that several conflicts and trouble spots dealt with by the Security Council are situated in the Muslim world, the role of OIC becomes imperative as a strategic partner of the United Nations in fostering international peace and security.

In the chapter on objectives and principles of the OIC Charter, the organization committed itself to adhering to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to actively contributing to international peace and security and to

promoting inter-State relations based on justice, mutual respect and good neighbourliness. The OIC Charter also requires its member States to settle their disputes peacefully and to refrain from the use of force in their relations. Chapter XV of the OIC Charter, which is specifically devoted to the peaceful settlement of disputes, provides guidance on the subject.

The OIC 2025 Programme of Action adopted by the Islamic Summit Conference, held in Istanbul in April 2016, and the Ten-Year Programme of Action before it, rightly identified conflict situations as a major challenge facing the umma in the twenty-first century and called for strengthening the role of the organization in conflict prevention, confidence-building, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation in member States as well as in conflict situations involving Muslim communities. It also stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation among OIC member States and between OIC and international and regional organizations in order to protect the rights and interests of member States in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict situations.

The United Nations and OIC have worked closely to restore peace and security in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Darfur/the Sudan, Libya, Mali, Somalia and Yemen. OIC opened offices in Kabul and Mogadishu in 2011. The two organizations worked together in reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sierra Leone and Somalia (see General Assembly resolution 67/264, para. 13). The United Nations and OIC also share common objectives in promoting and facilitating the Middle East peace process and the two-State solution in respect of the question of Palestine as well as in fostering solutions to other conflicts in accordance with the generally accepted norms and principles of international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Over the years, the two organizations have succeeded in establishing excellent working relations based on shared interests and concerns. This cooperation is being promoted through the convening of biennial meetings, which cover all fields. The thirteenth session of the OIC-United Nations biennial consultations was held at United Nations facilities in Geneva in May 2016 and adopted a matrix of well-defined activities to be implemented over the next two years. The next round will be hosted by OIC in 2018.

In his latest report, the Secretary-General of the United Nations recognized the enhancement of practical cooperation and the building of complementarity between the United Nations and OIC (see A/69/228-S/2014/560, paras. 115-121). In its resolution 69/317, the General Assembly expressed its conviction that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and OIC contributed to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Objectives

In recent years, the Muslim world in particular has been going through one of the most challenging moments in its history, which range from wars, foreign occupation and aggression, terrorism and extremism, and armed conflicts to natural and man-made disasters. There have also been developments concerning increased awakening of and movements for enhanced human rights. Since the world is globalized and interconnected, these developments have far-reaching impact beyond the borders of the affected States.

OIC, as the collective voice of the Muslim world, has a distinctive role and remains committed to finding durable solutions to these challenges. It has already taken a number of proactive steps to harmonize interests and views on how to address the challenges facing the Ummah. In addition to a range of steps being taken in the fields of peace, security, development, economy, environment, science, technology, health, women and youth empowerment, human rights and humanitarian assistance, the organization has recently established a Wise Persons Council to assume a wider and proactive role in dealing with conflict situations, the cessation of hostilities and peacebuilding processes in the member States. A dedicated Peace, Security and Mediation Unit is now in place to support the role of OIC in the peaceful settlement of disputes through the promotion of dialogue, mediation and preventive diplomacy.

The Security Council is also making strenuous efforts to maintain peace and security in the world through active engagement and steps taken in line with the Charter of the United Nations. However, actions taken by one organization alone would never be able to meet the numerous challenges faced by the world. Accordingly, there is a need for a global partnership. The United Nations and OIC must therefore respond to those needs and requirements on a timely basis and in an appropriate manner through strategic and enduring partnerships to address the daunting challenges in different areas.

The Security Council briefing on 17 November 2016 on the cooperation between the two organizations will provide an important opportunity for Council members, together with all stakeholders, to reflect on the best ways to enhance the strategic partnership in preventing and countering extremist ideology.

In accordance with its founding ideals, the International Organization of Islamic Cooperation has taken several initiatives to contribute to the fight against extremist ideology, which can lead to terrorism.

Of note among those initiatives are OIC efforts to endorse tools for combating extremism and promoting moderate Islamic narrative.

In the light of this, the Government of Senegal hosted, in Dakar on 28 and 29 April 2015, the tenth session of the OIC Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs, chaired by the President of Senegal, Macky Sall, on the theme "The role of youth and the media for peace and stability in the Muslim world". The conclusions of the session have been consolidated in the frame of the plan of action of the Committee presented to the thirteenth Islamic Summit Conference, held in Istanbul.

In the same vein, OIC, through the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and in partnership with the International Anti-Terrorism Forum, organized a workshop in Rabat on 1 and 2 November 2016, during which the role of education in promoting peace was highlighted and the challenge pertaining to Islamophobia was addressed.

A website for the OIC Centre for Dialogue, Peace and Understanding has been launched, as a reference and platform for communication and consultation to address the discourse on terrorism and to dismantle its ideological structure.

Bearing in mind the impact of the false and misleading claims made by terrorists on the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters, the aim of the Centre is to respond to those groups by broadcasting messages, articles and videos.

OIC is mindful that terrorism cannot be tackled exclusively through security means. A comprehensive and inclusive approach that takes into account the realities on the ground is required. The briefing will give impetus to the cooperation between OIC, the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, particularly on the implementation of United Nations resolutions on terrorism, with a focus on Security Council decisions.

Questions

The meeting may focus on, but not be limited to, the following:

- Opportunities and appropriate approaches that can better serve the purpose of enhancing the existing interaction and strategic partnership between the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, and OIC.
- Given the obvious advantages possessed by OIC, as the collective voice of the Muslim world, ways to garner a comprehensive partnership between the two organizations that can effectively supplement the efforts of the United Nations in tackling extremist ideology.
- Cooperation between the two organizations may have a particular focus on combating terrorism and violent extremism; human rights; and promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue, moderation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence among peoples and civilizations.
- Need for improved coordination at the institutional level between the two organizations, including the importance of increased technical and other forms of assistance to OIC and its related organs and institutions in order to strengthen their capacities for cooperation.
- Ways for the United Nations and OIC to achieve extended cooperation on the implementation of the plan of action on countering violent extremism at various institutional levels.
- The OIC Peace, Security and Mediation Unit has initiated a series of programmes of mutual benefit with the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat; the focus will be on how the cooperation between the Unit and the Departments of the United Nations will enable the two organizations to achieve the implementation of the collective objectives.

Format of the meeting

The meeting will be held in the format of a briefing, under the chairmanship of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad, Senegal, Mankeur Ndiaye.

Briefers

United Nations: Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Miroslav Jenca

Organization for Islamic Cooperation: Assistant Secretary-General, Hameed Opeloyeru

Columbia University: Souleymane Bachir Diagne